

## Council on Aging Relocates Operation Under New Director

It's been a nomadic existence for the town's Council on Aging over the past decade but now that the organization has a new full time director and a new home, stability appears to be on the horizon.

Director Sharon Souza no sooner came on the job in October than she prepared for yet another "temporary" move for the Council from the Alden Lower building to the recently renovated Old Town Hall building.

The Council officially begins its operations at Old Town Hall tomorrow following several weeks of remodeling involving partitions and other work at the Tremont St. building. The move is temporary, probably less than 2 years, Souza said, until a site committee can scope out other possible locations for a permanent home. Souza did not have a permanent site in mind but confirmed that people have talked about the possibility of relocating to the town library once the new library is completed.

Such a move would require capital improvements and handicapped access changes which would require funding. A site committee will visit many other town council of aging facilities before deciding what is right and in the realm of possibility for Duxbury, she said.

One member of the site committee is Justin McCarthy, the former president of her alma mater, Framingham State College, who is also a member of the Council.

Present plans at the new space call for a separate office/library area for the director, newly renovated kitchen area, entertainment area with TV and organ, storage area for the handicapped, a lounge area, 2 bathrooms, meeting space and other partitioned areas for the Council's many programs.

Souza, who comes to the job with a broad background and a master's degree in gerontology, hopes the new location will attract more of the town's 2,200 senior citizens. Currently about 400 are actively involved with town programs.

High on her priority list are expanding programs for seniors and looking into remediating breakdown problems with the town's senior citizen's van, which is now 10 years old with more than 150,000 miles. The van is also not handicapped access equipped, Souza said.

She was impressed with the town's commitment to

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its Council on Aging, as evidenced by the town's willingness to hire a full time director.

After several years with nursing homes in Fairhaven and Lowell and a stint as director of the Council on Aging in Andover, Souza moved back home to Lakeville to be near her aging parents. After working for a social services agency in Hingham, Souza applied for and was hired for the Duxbury post.

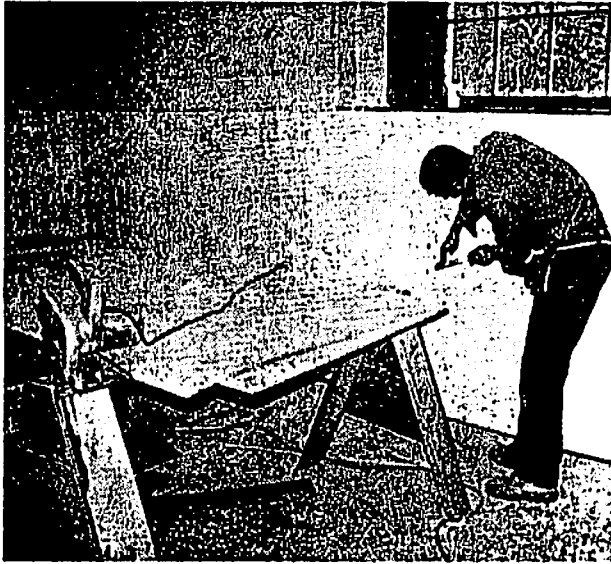
Overseeing the active Council includes its meals on wheels program 5 days a week, and congregate meals at its center 2 days a week. The council also provides a vast array of informational services and assistance for questions dealing with health care, housing, medical insurance, transportation and other needs.



Matt Watson, Charlie Critch and Dave Bartlett of the Duxbury Public Works Dept. pause for a photo at the Old Town Hall. The trio is renovating an old office and storage area to be used as the Council On Aging headquarters. Work will be completed on Dec. 19.

There are also exercise programs, health clinics, shopping and entertainment, and medical trips, card games, book clubs, lectures, and other activities. The council's primary source of income is from annual membership dues and contribution. Some programs are also state and federally supported.

She hopes to expand the council's outreach services to ensure that all seniors can take advantage of services available. Another goal is to reach all housebound



**Dave Bartlett of the DPW works on the new paneling at Old Town Hall. The Council On Aging is moving there from the Lower Alden School.**

people through neighborhood referral and other means.

She hopes to expand intergenerational programs with the schools as well.

Renovations to the Old Town Hall were completed with assistance from the town as well as support from citizens who donated trucks, labor and other services to save costs.